

1. Am J Otolaryngol. 2022 Sep-Oct;43(5):103599. doi: 10.1016/j.amjoto.2022.103599.
Epub 2022 Aug 12.

Pediatric temporomandibular joint ankylosis and arthritis: Forgotten complications of acute otitis media.

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Comment in

Am J Otolaryngol. 2023 Mar-Apr;44(2):103727.

OBJECTIVES: Temporomandibular joint (TMJ) arthritis and ankylosis represent unusual but potential complications of ear suppuration, especially in children. We performed a review of the literature of pediatric otogenic TMJ arthritis and ankylosis, discussing their clinical and radiological features, their mechanism of infection spread, and the importance of a prompt diagnosis and treatment. We additionally describe a case of TMJ ankylosis following acute mastoiditis in a 4-year-old female patient.

METHODS: A search of English literature from January 1, 1980 to December 31, 2021 was performed on the electronic databases (PubMed, Web of Science and Scopus) in order to identify studies concerning TMJ complication after ear suppuration.

RESULTS: Seventeen articles were considered eligible for the review. Eight and nine studies described otogenic TMJ ankylosis and arthritis, respectively. A

total of 17 children affected by ankylosis consequent to ear infection and a total of 31 cases of TMJ arthritis concurrent to otomastoiditis were identified. Mean time elapsed between ear infection and diagnosis of TMJ ankylosis was 4.8 years (range 0.5-13).

CONCLUSION: TMJ involvement during complicated otitis media should be kept in mind. Its prompt recognition is mandatory to set up appropriate treatment and follow-up and reduce the risk of ankylosis with its functional and psychological complications.

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DOI: [10.1016/j.amjoto.2022.103599](https://doi.org/10.1016/j.amjoto.2022.103599)

PMID: 35988366 [Indexed for MEDLINE]

Conflict of interest statement: Declaration of competing interest The authors have no conflict of interest to declare.